

Message Text

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70

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 PM-03 H-02 L-02

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9723

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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FAA BRUSSELS

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, FR

SUBJ: CIVAIR: AIR FRANCE FLEET RENEWAL

REF: PARIS 12546

1. ACCORDING HANS OTT OF BOEING, AIR FRANCE HAS SHOWN INTEREST IN LEASING SOME TEN USED 737-200'S THAT ARE NOW IN UNITED AIRLINES INVENTORY. THIS WOULD ONLY BE STOP-GAP MEASURE, OF COURSE, IN VIEW OF NEED FOR REPLACEMENT OF AIR FRANCE'S ENTIRE CARAVELLE FLEET, BUT OTT FEELS LEASED 737'S WOULD ENABLE BOEING HAVE FOOT IN THE DOOR FOR LANDING FUTURE CONTRACTS TO DELIVER NEW 737'S TO AIR FRANCE AT A LATER DATE. OTT SHARES OUR VIEW THAT CAVAILLE INTERVIEW (PARIS 13016) SUGGESTS THAT REVIVAL OF MERCURE 100 PROGRAM FOR CARAVELLE REPLACEMENT HAS BEEN DEFINITELY ABANDONED, BUT GOF IS LIKELY TO FAVOR SOME INTERIM SOLUTION (E.G., LEASING) UNTIL SUCH TIME AS FINAL DECISION CAN BE TAKEN ON WHETHER NEW AIRCRAFT OR DERIVATIVE USING CFM-56 ENGINE CAN BE DEVELOPED TO MEET AIR FRANCE'S LONGER-TERM

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RE-EQUIPMENT NEEDS.

2. OTT THOUGHT THAT BOEING CHAIRMAN WILSON MIGHT NOT WANT TO PURSUE IDEA OF MEETING WITH CAVAILLE, WHICH EMBASSY HAD OFFERED TO ASSIST IN ARRANGING (REFTEL). HE EXPLAINED THAT MEETINGS DURING AIR SHOW HAD BEEN PROGRAMMED FOR WILSON WITH HIS APPROVAL WITH THREE LEADING JOURNALISTS FROM FRENCH PUBLICATIONS, BUT WILSON HAD SUBSEQUENTLY ORDERED ARRANGEMENTS CANCELLED ON GROUNDS THAT JOURNALISTS WOULD PROBABLY QUESTION HIM ON SUBJECTS HE PREFERRED NOT TO DISCUSS. OTT THOUGHT THAT THIS RELUCTANCE ON WILSON'S PART MIGHT CARRY OVER TO ANY DISCUSSION WITH CAVAILLE. COMMENT: THOUGH OTT WAS RELUCTANT TO BE MORE PRECISE AND WE DID NOT PRESS HIM, WE SURMISE THAT WILSON'S RETICENCE REFLECTS BOEING DISINTEREST IN CONSIDERING ANY COOPERATIVE VENTURES WITH FRENCH INDUSTRY AT THIS TIME AND HENCE DESIRE AVOID BEING BACKED INTO A CORNER AND EVEN HAVING TO ADDRESS THE SUBJECT.
RUSH

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